



Joe Sanfelippo



Milwaukee County Supervisor - 17th District

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April 2011

Committee Assignments:

Parks, Energy and Environment (Vice-Chair) • Judiciary, Safety and General Services • Personnel

Dear Friends and Constituents,

You wouldn't know it based on the thermometer lately, but spring is officially here. The mountains of snow have just about vanished, the Brewers are back in action, the grass is slowly beginning to green up and the birds are returning. I love working outside in my yard and while some of my neighbors think I'm nuts (I've been known to cut my grass three times a week), I can't wait to fire up my lawn mower for another season.

One of my constituents let me know that he hadn't received the April E-news yet and I was glad to know (thanks Ed) that people actually look forward to reading them! I decided that I would wait until after the election for County Executive was over to send it out this month so I could comment on the results of the race and my thoughts on moving forward to restore financial solvency in Milwaukee County Government. Our financial challenges are great but not insurmountable. I am confident that, working together, we will enact real reforms that will increase our efficiency and effectiveness allowing us to overcome these difficult times.

I wish you and your family a very happy and blessed Easter.

New Milwaukee County Executive

As you know by now, Chris Abele has been elected our new County Executive. Mr. Abele has promised to not increase our property taxes, practice fiscally responsible budgeting to reduce county debt, protect and strengthen critical county services and partner with the private sector to create jobs.

This is a tall order but a good beginning. While we have heard little in the way of specifics, it appears that Mr. Abele understands there can be no more business as usual. Milwaukee County must look beyond the short-term, enact true reforms to address our long-term structural deficit, and return the County back to solid financial footing. I will work with him to achieve these goals.

Thank you Marvin Pratt

For the past several months, Marvin Pratt has been our Interim County Executive. As we transition into new leadership, I want to thank Mr. Pratt for his service to our County. His steady hand and thoughtful approach allowed the County to operate smoothly during his tenure.





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Better Use of Tax Dollars

Last month, the County Board approved spending \$800,000 on public art for the Courthouse downtown and the Vel Phillips Juvenile Justice Center on the county grounds.

Public displays of art play an important role in the quality of life for residents and visitors of Milwaukee County. But, during these very difficult financial times, there may be a better use for this money.

For instance, the cedar siding on the visitor center at the Wehr Nature Center is literally rotting off the building. The roof is leaking causing damage to the ceiling inside the building.

I argued unsuccessfully on the Board floor to delay approval of the artwork spending so that the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee could more thoroughly discuss if that was the best use of those funds. Artwork is nice, but it should not take precedent over repairs when we have park buildings falling apart. Money is scarce and we have to make sure we use every dollar wisely. We did not do that in this case, in my opinion.

Another example of money that would be better spent elsewhere is at O'Donnell Park.

The County is currently constructing repairs to the parking structure deemed necessary in the wake of last summer's tragic accident. It is important that we get the structure open as quickly as possible to satisfy parking needs for the two tenants the county has at O'Donnell Park as well as the Art Museum, War Memorial and other lakefront activities. The parks department is losing \$100,000 per month in revenue while the structure is closed.

However, along with the required repairs, the County is going to spend \$1.2 million installing decorative aluminum panels on two sides of structure. County Executive elect Chris Abele recently told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that he will cancel the installation of the decorative panels. I agree with this decision because that money could be used for more critical repairs needed in our parks department.

Thanks to a resolution by Supervisor Jursik, a committee has been put together to study other potential uses for O'Donnell Park that may include demolition or remodeling of the parking structure.

Until the committee finishes its work and we know for certain that the parking structure will remain in place for a long period of time, after repairs are complete, we should just put a coat of paint on it. We can always add the decorative panels at a later date.





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Performance Based Budgeting

I have put forth a resolution for consideration proposing to lay the groundwork for changing the budgeting practices of the county to what is known as Performance Based Budgeting (PBB).

PBB would require the County to set specific objectives it expects to achieve from departments. By devising a uniform set of standards for measuring the success or failure in meeting those objectives, departments are held more accountable for the money they spend. As a result, efficiency is maximized and departments need to prove a high value of return for every dollar spent.

Each department must evaluate its programs and services for effectiveness and efficiency. By following this method, well-run departments and programs are continued while failing ones are singled out for improvement or elimination.

The resolution also calls for study groups to be formed that would include departmental management as well as employees and a representative from the private sector that has

experience to analyze programs and services performed by each department and recommend specific actions to increase efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

More than 50% of Fortune 500 companies employ this "team approach" in their day-to-day operations to help them operate at peak efficiency and maintain competitiveness.

Because PBB is a much more detail oriented form of budgeting, it will require a phased-in approach over a number of years. A task force made up of staff from both the Executive and Legislative branches should be put in place to closely monitor the process to ensure a smooth transformation.

I am hopeful that the Board will agree to consider reforming our budget process in this manner. As state and federal aids are likely to be cut or remain stagnant over the next several years as budget reduction measures are passed down to the County, performance based budgeting has the potential to improve the efficiency of government and enable us to "do more with less."



Milwaukee County Parks

National Gold Medal Winner



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